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## Exploration and Discovery

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### BIBLICAL TEXTS FROM THE PAPYRI

With a wealth of classical texts, new and old, and an interesting selection of Roman and Byzantine documents, the seventh volume of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* includes four biblical texts of remarkable antiquity. A vellum leaf from the latter part of the third century preserves parts of Genesis, chaps. 2 and 3, in the Septuagint version. A remarkable feature of this fragment is its use of a symbol of Hebrew derivation for the name of Jehovah, which, it will be remembered, the Septuagint usually renders by *κύριος*. In Septuagint manuscripts such a symbol has hitherto been found only in a Hexapla fragment published by Dr. C. Taylor in his *Cairo Palimpsests*. The symbol used in the new Oxyrhynchus Genesis is a development of the Hebrew abbreviation “ which occurs in later Hebrew manuscripts. In the present parchment it takes the form of a doubled Z with a horizontal stroke across the middle of both letters. Origen’s remark that “in the most accurate copies the name is written in Hebrew characters” may therefore apply to Septuagint as well as Aquila manuscripts of his time, although it has been supposed to mean only the latter. On the whole this parchment is one of the oldest and the most interesting fragments of the Septuagint Genesis thus far published.

The apocalypse comprising chaps. 15, 16 of the apocryphal book which appears in the Vulgate as IV Ezra exists in a variety of other versions, but has not hitherto been found in Greek. Indeed it has been debated whether it ever existed in a Greek form. Oxyrhynchus now answers the question by disclosing a single parchment leaf complete, but of the smallest size, on which three verses (16:57-59) of what the Vulgate calls IV Ezra appear in Greek. These apocalyptic chapters, 15 and 16, scholars now call VI Ezra, and refer to the third, or even the second, century after Christ. The parchment is assigned by Dr. Hunt to the fourth century. The leaf with its margins measures only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and the number 40 (M) at the head of the recto suggests that a moderate body of text preceded. Dr. Hunt infers that “VI Ezra” probably circulated by itself. Small as it is, this parchment leaf makes a substantial contribution to our knowledge of apocryphal literature.

Two leaves from a papyrus book of the fourth century supply parts of the Greek text of I Cor., chaps. 7, 8, and of Phil., chaps. 3, 4. In type

of text, the papyrus shows general agreement with the leading uncials, *Vaticanus*, *Sinaiticus*, and *Alexandrinus*. The new classical texts include large fragments from two lost poems of the Alexandrian Callimachus, the *Aetia* and the *Iambi*, as well as an unmistakable fragment of the *Misoumenos* of Menander. The documents comprise rescripts, letters, orders, accounts, and leases in great variety, dating from 22 B.C. to 600 A.D. Two Christian prayers and a Gnostic amulet, of the Byzantine time, are among the most interesting of these. The volume has been prepared and edited by Dr. Arthur S. Hunt, for so many years the associate of Professor Grenfell in the discovery and interpretation of Greek papyri.

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